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# HASTINĀPURA

## The Glory of Ancient India

BY

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FOREWORD BY

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To

*The Sacred Memory*

*of*

*My Parents*

कुरोः पुत्रोऽभवद् हस्ती तदुपज्ञमिदं पुरम् ।
हस्तिनापुरमित्याहुरनेकाश्चर्यशेवधिम् ॥

Hastin, the son of Kuru founded
Hastināpura, the city of many
wonders

# PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The Jain Cultural Research Society has brought out so far 32 pamphlets and six books by eminent scholars The author of the present work is new to the world of scholarship This is his maiden attempt How far he has succeeded, should be left to the readers to judge We can foresee a bright future for him on the basis of the remarkable progress made in a very short period

Shri Amar Chand, the author of the present work, is a post-graduate student of the College of Indology, Banaras Hindu University He was sent to Hastināpura for practical training in Field-archaeology by the College on invitation from the Department of Archaeology, Government of India Inspired by the traditional glory of the city, he wrote this book which gives an impetus for the exploration of further historical study of the buried city, once pride of India

The publication of this book has been delayed for certain unavoidable circumstances

The Society undertakes the publication of works mainly on Jainology It is not due to any

sectarian bias, but because this branch of learning has remained so far neglected The Society wants to attract the attention of the scholarly world towards this important field As a matter of fact it aims at patronising, within the scope of its capacity, every scholar with unprejudicial and honest outlook We hope the broad-minded devotees of learning will cooperate in our mission and help the Society by their contributions

BANARAS–5
*Jan 26, 1952*

**Dalsukh Malvania**
*Secretary,*
Jain Cultural Research Society

# FOREWORD

Hastināpura, the ancient capital of the Pauravas, played a very important part in the evolution and expansion of the Aryan culture in India, and continued to be one of the most famous cities of Āryāvarta upto a century or so later than the Mahābhārata war, according to the Purānic and Epic traditions, when it was washed away by the fury of the otherwise mild 'Gangā' Its survivor too had its existence for a long period till it finally merged into insignificance and oblivion The history of such a city is bound to be of considerable interest and importance for the study of Indian history and civilization

This small but valuable publication by my pupil, Shri Amar Chand, is highly welcome, as it throws light on archaeology and history of Hastināpura Besides dealing with the positive side of the history of Hastināpura on the basis of archaeological finds, he has given the literary and traditional picture of the city which will greatly help the interpretation of excavations at the site identified with it The reconstruction

of India's past requires a full and intensive study of local history and archaeology The attempt made by the author is surely a step forward in that direction

The treatment of the subject is systematic, scholarly and indicative of a great promise I have genuine pleasure in commending this work to the students of Indian history and archaeology

**R. B Pandey**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In dealing with the history portion based upon the Jaina evidence, a Hindi pamphlet by Śri Vijayendra Sūri on this historic city was of much help to me All important references have been given in the foot notes.

I am thankful to my Principal, Dr R C Mazumdar, for giving me an opportunity to join the excavations My Professor, Dr R B Pandey has laid me under obligation by guiding me through this work and also by consenting to write a forward to these pages I feel very much grateful to the Editorial Board of the Jain Cultural Research Society for accepting this monograph for publication Śri Omprakash Jain, Overseer, has very kindly supplied me with photographs other than the one of excavation. I am also grateful to Prof Dalsukh Malvania for his kind assistance throughout On this occasion I cannot forget my brother, Dr Bool Chand, I A S , who has always been a source of inspiration to me, and specially urged me to write this book

**Amar Chand**

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# I

## SITUATION

Hastināpura,[1] one of the oldest and most celebrated cities of ancient India is situated in the Mawana *tehsil* of Meerut district, about 22 miles from Meerut city itself. The ancient mounds of this great city stand on the western bank, which is also the higher bank of a thin streamlet, known by the name of 'Būḍhi-Gangā'[2], Lat 29° 9′ N , Long. 78° 3′ E. This streamlet is a branch of the sacred river Ganges, which flows at a distance of about seven miles further east The popular tradition is that the Būdhi-Gangā stream represents an old bed of the Ganges, which, however, changed its course to the east leaving a thin stream in its old bed

Hastināpura is very easily accessible from Meerut, a well-known railway station on the Delhi-Ambala line of the East Punjab Railway There is a *pucca* tarred road, and public buses are available at all times of the day at a moderate charge of Rs 1/4/-

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[1] In Prakrit books this city is styled variously, as हत्थिणउर, हत्थिणपुर, हत्थिणाउर, हत्थिणापुर, गयउर, गयपुर, गयनगर and in Sanskrit books as गजाह्वय, गजसाह्वय, गजनगर, गजपुर, हस्तिनपुर, हस्तिनापुर, हस्तिनीपुर, नागाह्वय, नागसाह्वय, नागपुर etc

[2](*a*) ततो भगीरही रहमारूहिय दण्डरयणेण नदिं आगरिसति कुरूजणवयाण मज्झेण फुसती हत्थिणउर नीया ।

वसुदेव हिण्डि–प्रथम खण्डम्–पृष्ठ ३०५.

(*b*) भागीरथीसलिलसङ्गपवित्रमेतज्जीयाच्चिर गजपुर भुवि तीर्थरत्नम् ॥ विविध तीर्थकल्प—५० १९. पृ०९४.

## II

## TOPOGRAPHY

The mounds of Hastināpura, which have excited the jealousy of the archæologist during the last few decades, are situated on the bank of the Būdhi-Gangā in a somewhat remote tract These mounds consist of two portions the northern is known as 'Hastināpura Patti-Kauravan,' and the southern is called 'Hastināpura Patti-Pāndavan' The former mound is famous locally as Ultā-Khedā, which means a topsy-turvy mound This mound is not in any way remarkable, nor is there anything special in its aspect to distinguish it from several other mounds in the neighbourhood, except that it is a little higher than the others, its height being between 50 and 60 feet above the surrounding ground level It is possible that this mound was under habitation over a longer period, for even today there stands on it a portion of a big wall built of *lakhauri* bricks which is reminiscent of an old fort relating probably to the Moghal period

From the north to the south the mound slopes to about 35 feet deep to a length of about 300 feet, when it again rises to practically the former height From the west to the east also it slopes to about 15 feet in depth, and nearly to the same length Due to wear and tear and creation of a number of rain-gullies, it is no longer possible to trace with accuracy the original position or extent of the fort A small memorial has been recently erected on the highest contour of the Ultā-Khedā mound by the Jainas.

There are several other mounds in the neighbourhood which might also be fairly ancient. Some of these have been taken possession of by various religious sects, such as the Śwetāmbara Jainas, the Digambara Jainas, the Ārya Samājists, who have all built a small structure or erected a monument on the top as a mark of their possession of these mounds

The scene roundabout the Ultā-Khedā is a singularly pleasant one In the winter months, when the sun cools down and shines dim in the rugged crags of the mounds, there is a wonderful charm alike in form and colour, which is mostly misty, and this charm is enhanced by the wealth of the jungle shrubs, big and small, with wild flowers of various colours and gentle fragrance which jet out from every nook and crevice The vegetation grows free and dense on all the slopes all around, but most luxuriantly in the rain-gully, which divides the Ultā-Khedā into two parts

The easternmost tract is the well-known *Khādar* land of the Ganges Valley It is bound on the west by the high cliff under which, for three-fourths of its length, flows the Būdhi-Gangā, which is connected with the main stream by numerous water-courses Many parts of the *Khādar* area are no doubt capable of cultivation, but the place is now covered with grass and jungle full of leopards, boars and other wild animals It is a tract with many wandering depressions, but fairly raised on the whole, with soils that are poor and light and quickly exhausted In the southern portion, the level appears to be lower than in the north, and

sinks gradually till in Gadhamukteśvara, about 25-30 miles from here, we come across heavy swampy land.

The Būḍhi-Gangā, which forms so marked a feature of the *Khādar*, is a sluggish irregular stream, which in many places rather resembles a chain of swamps than a river It enters the district of Muzaffarnagar at the village of Firozepur, and flows southwards into Parganā Gadhamukteśvara, when it joins the Ganges Its distance, from high bank, which separates the *Khādar* from the uplands, ranges from a few yards to a quarter of a mile Its depth varies considerably in the hot weather, when it is quite dry in places, but it always holds water in some of its large swamps, which are generally marshy reed-covered *jhīls* with patches of open water The stream itself is of no use, but *kāns* for matting, and reeds for wicker-chairs are cut from the swamps along its course Opposite Hastināpura is a series of such *jhīls*

There are some traditional *Ghātas* on the Būdhi-Gangā, such as Karna Ghāta, Draupadī Ghāta etc., where devotees from the neighbouring villages gather on the sacred days of the year to take a dip in the holy water

There are two Jaina temples in existence here today One is a huge Digambara Jaina temple This temple was built about two hundred years ago [1] A big fair is held at this temple every year

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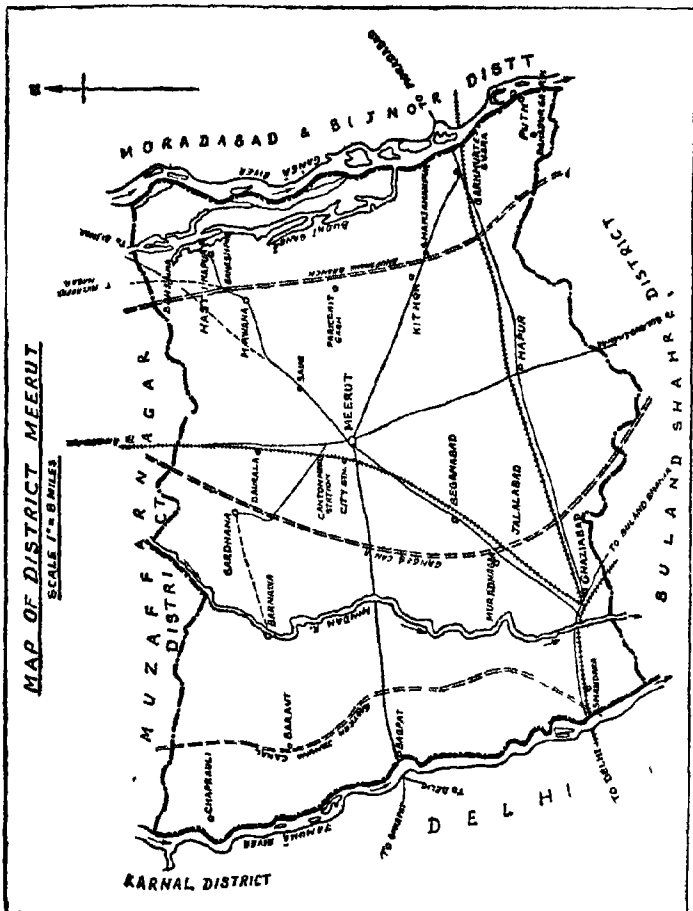
[1] This temple was constructed by Seth Suganchand Jain, son of Raja Harsukhrai of Delhi, who was the State cashier of the Moghals The construction of temples during

on the full moon day of the month of *Kārtika*. A chariot procession is also taken out on the first of the dark half of the month of *Mārgaśīrṣa* Both these occasions are of great religious importance for the Jainas, who come from far and near to visit this place every year Other is a Śwetāmbara Jaina temple, which is smaller Apart from these temples there are three Jaina memorials called 'Nissis' situated about a mile to the north of the Jaina temples A few more deserted temples are scattered along the ridge overlooking the *Khādar*, but none of them appear to be of any great antiquity

There are many places round Hastināpura, all situated in the Meerut district, which are said to belong to the Mahābhārata period Saini, a village in the Mawana *tehsil*, is said to have been the great gate of the city of Hastināpura in very old days It is about 16 miles away from Hastināpura Other places for which a similar antiquity is claimed are ·

(1) Paricchitagadha also in Mawana *tehsil* Here was situated the fort of Parīkṣita, the grandson

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the muslim rule was not an easy thing, more especially at Hastināpura which was so near Delhi, the Moghal capital. Above all the Rāngadas ( रागड़ i e Musalmān Rajputs) of Mirānpura were the greatest obstacle in the construction work They were against the construction of the temple.

Hastināpura and Mirānpura both formed part of the State of Sadhaura in those days And the Rājā of that State, was, it so happened, under certain obligation of the Seth and on a request from the latter, the Rājā, somehow, managed to pacify the Rāngadas and thus helped in the construction work

Jñānodaya, May '51 Page 737, published by the Bhāratīya Jñānapītha, Banaras.

of Arjuna, the famous hero of the Mahābhārata battle; (ii) Pūth, in *tehsil* Hapur, the name of which is derived from Pushpavati, the favourite garden of the Hastināpura rulers, and (iii) Rājā Karna kā Khedā. Karna, son of Kunti by the Sun-god, was a favourite of the Kauravas, and was killed by Arjuna in the famous Mahābhārata battle. Gadhamukteśvara on the Ganges is also said to have been a part of Hastināpura at that time.

The district of Meerut is considered to be one of the healthiest places in India, and the climate is found to be favourable to persons suffering from many a disease induced by residence in other parts of the country.

Now the Government of Uttara Pradeśa are taking steps to make use of most of lands lying useless here. Hastināpura has been selected as one of the many sites for proposed township for displaced persons who have come from Pakistān in the recent years. The town is already under construction. Otherwise the area is quite uninhabited, the only habitation being the two Jaina temples.

# III

# HISTORY

Notwithstanding the power and fame of the city of Hastināpura in the ancient times, the information which we possess regarding its history is singularly meagre, being drawn in the main from the accounts of the early Indian writers

## (A)

## EPIC AND PURANIC TRADITION

According to the Mahābhārata[1] and the Bhāgawata,[2] Hastināpura was founded by Hastin, son of Brhatksatra, a descendant of the Paurava family

But we come across references in the Mahābhārata that Hastināpura was the capital of Dusyanta[3] and also of his famous and pious son Bharata,[4] who was also called *Sarvadamana* The latter was a great monarch with a wide sway so much so that this country was named 'Bhārata' after him

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[1] सुहोत्र खल्विक्ष्वाकुकन्यामुपेयेमे सुवर्णां नाम। तस्यामस्य जज्ञे हस्ती। य इद हस्तिनापुर मापयामास। एतदस्य हस्तिनापुरत्वम्। महा० I 90 36 (BORI)

[2] पुष्करारुणिरित्यत्र ये ब्राह्मणगतिं गता ।
बृहत्क्षत्रस्य पुत्रोऽभूद्धस्ती यद्धस्तिनापुरम् ॥
श्रीमद्भागवत, स्कध IX 21 20

[3] गजसाह्वयम्, Mahābhārata, 1 68 12 (BORI)

[4] Ibid, 1 89 40

The above are two contradictory statements. Hastin was fifth in succession to Dusyanta A city founded by Hastin could not, therefore, be the capital city of his fore-fathers Probably the city was already in existence before Hastin, and he enlarged it and made it prosperous and flourishing, and therefore its people associated his name with this city and the tradition has continued.

Hastin had two sons—Ajamīdha and Dvimīdha The former, whose name occurs in a hymn of the Rig-Veda,[1] continued to rule at Hastināpura, and the latter set up a separate kingdom Ajamīḍha's death was followed by the partition of his kingdom among his three sons Hastināpura was under Riksa, and his two brothers settled in north Pāncāla with Ahicchatrā for capital and south Pāncāla with Kāmpilya and Mākandī as their capitals

The Epic and Purānic tradition regarding the origin of the Kurus is as follows Puru,[2] the son of Yayāti by Vrsaparva's daughter, Śarmistā, and grandson of Nāhusa, was fifth in descent from Pururava, son of Ilā, who was in her turn daughter of Manu, the father of mankind And the dynasty which sprang from this Puru was celebrated as the Paurava dynasty It was known as the Lunar dynasty

Tenth in descent from Puru was Samavarna, whose capital was Hastināpura When Samavarna's

[1] IV 44 6

[2] Mahābhārata, Drona Parva, Chap 63, (Krishnacharyā & Vyasacharya)

kingdom was conquered by Sudāsa, the king of the Pāncāla, Samavarna left his capital and fled away in fear together with his wives, children and ministers, taking shelter in a forest situated on the bank of the river Sindhu He eventually regained his kingdom with the help of his priest—the sage Vaśistha[1] ; and then Samavarna is mentioned to have established lordship over all the Ksatriya princes A son was born to him, whose name was Kuru and who grew up as a boy of manifold qualities

Kuru succeeded his father to the throne of Hastināpura, and raised the Paurava realm to eminence and extended his sway beyond Prayāga He gave his name to Kuruksetra and Kurujāngala, which adjoined it on the east and in which Hastināpura lay,[2] the land on which the fate of India has been determined since the days of the Mahābhārata to quite recent times, in the famous battles of Panipat His successors were called the Kurus or Kauravas, and this name of the royal family was extended to the people of the country also, according to the common Indian usage Kuru was so celebrated for his religious and pious rule that he made the Kuruksetra famous all over the earth for its holiness His greatness lent his name to the very dynasty of which he was such a worthy son

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[1] Mah i 89 30 to 35 (BORI)

[2] तेषु त्रिषु कुमारेषु जातेषु कुरुजाङ्गलम् ।
कुरवोऽथ कुरुक्षेत्रं त्रयमेतदवर्धत ॥
Mah i 102 1 and also i 102 22, i 191 9

Kuru's grandson, Janamejaya lost the throne, which then passed on to another younger branch, and the kingdom appears to have declined

*Mahābhārata Battle*

Later, the Kauravas again became eminent under Prātipa,[1] and his son and successor, Śāntanu, who is said to have been a world-famous righteous king

From Kuru to Śāntanu, the Visnu Purāna gives fourteen generations The other Purānas have slight variations, but in all accounts their capital remained continuously at Hastināpura Śāntanu's grandsons were Dhrtarāstra and Pāndu. The former had one hundred sons, Duryodhana &c, who being the elder branch were known as the Kauravas Pāndu had five sons, Yudhisthira &c, who were known as the Pāndavas. Pāndu on his death was succeeded by his elder brother Dhrtarāstra, who was born-blind There was intense jealousy between the cousins To avoid conflict, Dhrtarāstra divided the kingdom. Hastināpura remained with the Kauravas, and the Pāndavas received the small principality of Indraprastha near modern Delhi The latter were, however, very ambitious, and in order probably to increase their territory, Arjuna, with the help of Krsna, the Lord of the Yādavas, killed

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[1] प्रातिप शन्तनुस्तात कुलस्यार्थे यथा स्थित ।
यथा देवव्रतो भीष्म कुलस्यार्थे स्थितोऽभवत् ॥

Mahābhārata, v 148. 2.

(T R Krishnacharya & Vyasacharya)

Jarāsandha,[1] the king of Magadha, who had arisen to the highest power and had extended his supremacy as far as Mathurā

The Pāṇḍavas were later on banished for fourteen years as a penalty for losing at dice and at the end of that period they reclaimed their principality, but Duryodhana refused all terms, and then they appealed to arms They were aided by the Matsyas, the Cedis, the Karusas, the Kāśis, the Southern Pāncālas, the Western Māgadhas and the Western Yādavas from Gujarāta and Saurāstra, and on Duryodhana's side were all the nations of the Punjab, other kingdoms of Northern India, and north of Deccan There was a deadly fight for eighteen long days, which ended in the ultimately victory of the Pāndavas, with the slaughter of nearly all the kings and princes who took part in it[2] This was the famous Mahābhārata battle. Yudhisthira became king of the Kurus,[3] and reigned at Hastināpura thereafter

*Events After the Battle*

After a long reign, the Pāndavas retired to the jungle, and placed Parīksita,[4] Arjuna's grandson, on the throne of Hastināpura The Atharva Veda

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[1] Mbh ii, 19 to 24, and Padma Purāna, vi, 279, 1 to 12.

[2] All discussed in Journal of Royal Asiatic Sociey, 1908, pp 309 cf

[3] Mahābhārata, xiv, 88, 28, xv, 37, 2, xvii, 1, 8 etc. कुरुराजो युधिष्ठिर (Kinjawadekar, Poona)

[4] परीक्षिद्धस्तिनापुरे Mahābhārata, xvii, 1, 9, (Kinjawadekar-Poona), Brahma Purāna, 212, 91 to 95.

mentions Parīkṣita as high above the mortals whose subjects had a happy domestic life, commanding plenty of barley, curds and drink.

Here we come across the famous story of how Parīkṣita once having forgotten his way in the jungle, asked a sage who was under a vow of silence, the way to Hastināpura, his capital city, and getting no reply was enraged and placed a dead snake round the sage's neck. The sage's son hearing of that, cursed the king who was reduced to ashes within a week by a snake bite This is thought to be the dawn of the Kali-Age

Pargiter[1] suggests that the great slaughter of Kṣatriyas in the Mahābhārata battle seriously weakened the stability of the kingdom, especially in the NorthWest and the Punjab, which were faced by hostile frontier tribes Consequently it is not surprising that the accounts indicate disorganization Nāgas,[2] probably the uncivilized aboriginal tribes, had established themselves at Takṣasilā They assailed Hastināpura, and its ruler, Parīksita, in his attempt to check their aggression, was killed by Takṣaka, king of the Nāgas The above-mentioned mythical story, that Parīksita died by a snake bite on account of a curse, is given, according to Pargiter, in explanation of this event

After his death, Parīkṣita was succeeded to the throne of Hastināpura by Janamejaya, his son This monarch is said to have been a *Sārvabhauma*,

[1] Ancient Indian Historical Traditions, 1922, p 285

[2] The word 'Nāga' has been interpreted to mean 'serpent' in Sanskrit

who conquered all parts of the earth. His chief exploit was the performance of a *Sarpayajña*, in order to avenge his father's death, in which *Yajña* all the Nāgas were killed. The story is perhaps only a symbolical way of representing his conquest of Takṣaśilā in revenge of his father's death.

Historical tradition maintains that the Nāgas made peace with Janamejaya later on and continued to hold the North-West Later on we find Udayana twenty-fourth in the line from Janamejaya, so famous in the world of romance, marrying a Nāga girl [1]

After Janamejaya's death, the principalities on the Saraswati and at Indraprastha disappeared and Hastināpura remained the outpost of the Hindu kingdoms of Northern India [2]

Such conditions prevailed for some time, but Janamejaya's fourth successor, Nicaksu, abandoned the city of Hastināpura, and made Kauśāmbi or Kosam near Allahabad, his capital, because Hastināpura was swept away by the Ganges The explanation is inadequate, because if that were the whole truth, he could have chosen some other place nearby as a new capital, and there was no necessity for him to move his capital to Kauśāmbi, more than three hundred miles south-east across the Southern Pāncāla Manifestly he was obliged to abandon the whole northern part of the Ganges-Jamuna *doab*, and there can be no doubt that he was

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[1] Vedic India—V Rangacharya, Vol II (Pt I), pp 216-17

[2] Mahābhārata, 1, 39 18 to 40 5, 46 33 to 53, 10

driven south by pressure from the Punjab This retreat mixed up the Kurus of Hastināpura with the Southern Pāncālas including the Śriñjayas, rather blended the Kuru-Pāncālas, a fusion which may be reckoned according to the date estimated by Pargiter at about 820 B C[1]

Regarding the washing of Hastināpura, there is a legend mentioned in the Sānkhyāyana Śrauta Sūtra[2] that Vriddhadyumna, apparently a son of Abhipraštārin—a Kuru king, erred in a sacrifice when a Brāhmana uttered a curse that the Kurus would be expelled from Hastināpura A sacrificial error was not a trivial matter, especially in the ancient realm of the Kurus, which was the citedal of Brāhmanic ritualism

There are references in the Mahābhārata and Visnu Purāna[3] about the destruction of Hastinā-pura once by Balarāma, brother of Krsna, and then finally by the erosive action of the Ganges

(B)

## BUDDHIST TRADITION

The ancient Kuru country is mentioned in the Lalitavistara as one of the sixteen Janapadas of Jambūdvīpa According to the Pali literature, this Janapada extended over an area of 8000 yojanas. In the Kalpadruma Avadāna[4] it is stated that the

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[1] Ancient Indian Historical Traditions, 1922, pp 182 & 285

[2] XV 16 10 to 13

[3] Quoted by Dowson, VII Ed P 120

[4] Nepalese Buddhist Literature, P 297

Buddha once visited the city of the Kauravas, but unfortunately the name of the city is not given. Dr. B C Law[1] identifies the Kaurava city with Hastinăpura, which is several times mentioned in the Sanskrit Buddhist texts.

But this does not appear to be correct, because the city has distinctively been mentioned to have been washed away long before the Buddha's time There must have been some other town of the Kauravas visited by the Buddha, for the Kaurava capital too was shifted to Kauśāmbi It is not impossible, however, that the present city mentioned in the above-cited work may be a succession of the old city of Hastirāpura

The Bodhisattvāvadāna Kalpalatā[2] definitely states that Hastināpura was the capital of the Kauravas It also mentions that the city of Hastināpura was once visited by the Buddha. Here an excellent Brāhmana approached him and praised him [3]

Mahāvastu Avadāna[4] mentions that King Arjuna of Hastināpura was in the habit of killing those holy men who were unable to satisfy him by answers to the questions put by him

Mahāvastu[5] refers to Sudhānu, son of Subāhu, another king of Hastināpura, who fell in love with a Kinnari girl of a distant country, and came

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[1] Geographical Essays, Vol I, 1937, P 28

[2] 3rd Pallava, 116 , 64th, P 9

[3] Ibid, 64th, P 72

[4] III, P 361

[5] Vol II, pp 94-95

back with her to the capital where he had been associated with his father in the government of the kingdom.

The city of Hastināpura is described in the Divyāvadāna[1] as 'a rich, prosperous and populous city. Close by there was a big lake full of lotuses, swans and cranes.'

The Lalitavistara[2] refers to Hastināpura as having been ruled by a king descended from the Pāṇḍava race, valiant and the most handsome and glorious among conquerors.

It would not be out of place here to make mention of an Aśoka Pillar found in the vicinity of Meerut by Sultan Firoz Shah (A D 1351-88), who took it to Delhi and erected on Ridge to the north-west of modern Delhi[3] The Buddha, as mentioned above, had paid a visit to this part of the country It is therefore, nothing strange that this place was revered by Aśoka and was selected as a site for the erection of his pillar

Further, in the reign of Samprati,[4] the grandson of the Emperor Aśoka, Hastināpura is referred to as a province with Hastināpura proper as its capital, which shows that the city was in existence in the 2nd Century B C, though it had probably declined in power and fame

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[1] P 435

[2] Chap III.

[3] Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum—Inscriptions of Asoka, Vol I pp xvii and 137 to 140 (Delhi-Meerut Pillar Edict) (That Pillar is now standing near Fatehgadh in Sabzi Mandi)

[4] Ancient India—T L Shah, Vol II.

PANDAVESHVARA TEMPLE

DIGAMBARA TEMPLE
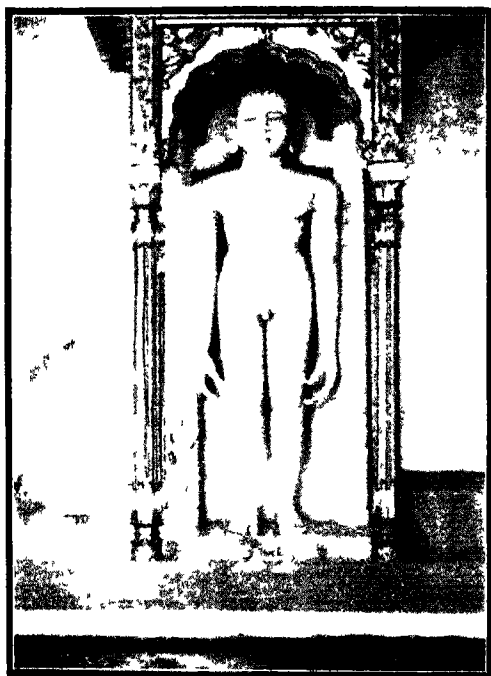
IMAGE OF A JAIN TIRTHANKARA

## (C)

## JAINA TRADITION

According to the Jaina tradition, Lord Ṛṣabhadeva, who was the son of Nābhi, had one hundred sons. Of these sons the twentyfirst was Kuru, who gave his name to Kurukṣetra *i.e.* the land of the Kuru And in turn Kuru had a son, whose name was Hasti, who founded the city of Hastināpura.[1]

Hastināpura has been mentioned, in the Vasudevahindī,[2] as a city in the Kuru Janapada of *Bhāratavarṣa* and there is a reference to king Viśvasena, the father of Lord Śāntinātha of that city

Hastināpura is associated with Lords Śāntinātha, Kunthunātha and Aranātha,[3] the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth Jaina Tīrthankaras, who also were the fifth, sixth and seventh Cakravartins, according to the traditional lists of the

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[1] शतपुत्र्यामभून् नाभिसूनो सूनु कुरुर्नृप ।
कुरुक्षेत्रमिति ख्यात राष्ट्रमेतत्तदाख्यया ॥२॥
कुरो पुत्रोऽभवद् हस्ती तत्पुत्रमिद पुरम् ।
हस्तिनापुरमित्याहुरनेकाश्चर्यसेवधिम् ॥३॥
विविध तीर्थकल्पे—५०, पृष्ठ ९४

[2] "इहेव भरहे कुरुजणवए हत्थिणाउरे नयरे विस्ससेणो राया"—
वसुदेवहिंडी, खड १, पृष्ठ ३४०

[3] तत्थ सिरिसति-कुथु-अरनाहा जहासख सोलसम-सत्तरसम-
ट्ठारसमा जिणिंदा जाया । पचम-छट्ठ-सत्तमा य कमेण
चक्कवट्टी होऊ छखडभरहवासरिद्धि भुजिंसु ।
विविह तीर्थकप्पे—हस्तिनापुरकल्प —१६, पृष्ठ २७

Jainas It is mentioned as a place where they were born, ruled, took to ascetic life, sat in contemplation, practised hard austerities and ultimately got 'Enlightenment' The three memorials known as 'Nissis', built by the Jaina community at Hastināpura, are associated with them, and the Jainas from all parts of the country visit this place every year to pay their homage to their great teachers

The Jaina literary sources mention a visit of Lord Rsabhadeva, the first Jaina Tīrthankara, to the city of Hastināpura, after taking to asceticism, for alms in order to break his one year's fast, at the hands of Śreyāns Kumāra, who is believed to be a grandson of Bāhubalī—the person who got the Kingdoms of Taksaśilā and Hastināpura from Lord Rsabhadeva when the latter distributed his vast empire before becoming a monk [1]

Lord Mallinātha,[2] the nineteenth Tīrthankara, also paid a visit to the city of Hastināpura According to the Śwetāmbara Jaina belief, Mallinātha was a female When she was in her youth, her father's capital at Mithilā, in Bihar, was attacked by at least six princes in order to take her away,

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[1](*a*) बाहुबली हत्थिणाउर-तक्खसिला सामी ।

वसुदेवहिंडी खड १, पृष्ठ १८६

(*b*) तत्थेव सवच्छरमणसिओ भयव उसभसामी बाहुवलिनत्तुअस्स सिज्जसकुमरस्स तिहुअणगुरुदसणजायजाईसरणजाणिअदाणविहिणो गेहे अक्खयतइयादिणे इक्खुरसेण पढमपारणयमकासी ।

विविध तीर्थकल्पे—हस्तिनापुरकल्प —१६, पृष्ठ २७

[2] मल्लिसामि अ तत्थेव नयरे समोसढो—

विविध तीर्थकल्पे—१६, पृष्ठ २७

but she refused to marry at all There was Ādinaśatru, the prince of Hastināpura, also present amongst those six princes However, they all became Jaina monks on hearing her sermons.

Of the twelve Cakravartins, the fourth, Sanatkumāra and the eighth, Subhūma, were born at Hastināpura Mention has already been made of the fifth, sixth and seventh Cakravartins, who also were born here

Lord Pārśvanātha, the twenty-third Jaina Tīrthankara, is said to have visited a number of prominent cities of Northern India, and the name of Hastināpura (Hatthināpura) is mentioned among them [1] Lord Pārśvanātha was the immediate predecessor of Lord Mahāvīra, and flourished some 250 years before the latter, towards the end of the ninth Century B C

Lord Mahāvīra has been mentioned in the Bhagawati[2] as having ordained the King Śiva of Hastināpura

The famous furious Parśurāma too was born in Hastināpura His father was Jamadagni and mother Renukā He learnt the art of fighting with axe from Vidyādhara After killing Goharaka Anantavīrya, he avenged his father's death by murdering Kṛtavīrya He cleared this earth of Kṣatriyas as many as 21 times [3]

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[1] Nāyādhammakahā II, P 229 (N V Vaidya-Poona-1940).

[2] 11, 9.

[3] योगशास्त्र स्वोपज्ञ वृत्ति—पत्र ७४

'Gayapura or Hatthināpura (Hastināpura) is included among the ten capital cities of the Jaina India '[1]

Hastināpura has been mentioned as a province in the reign of Samprati,[2] grandson of Aśoka, who flourished in the later part of the third Century B C and is believed to have been a Jaina by faith. This province included the area between the Sutlej and Kannauj upto the Himālayas in the North and the Jamunā in the South Hastināpura proper was the capital city of the province

Apart from this, there are many legends, found in the various ancient works of the Jainas, mentioning Hastināpura Here is one mentioned in the *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* [3]

"There was once a king Padmottara, who ruled in Hastināpura His queen was Jwālā He had two sons—Visnukumāra and Mahāpadma. The former became a Jaina monk, while the latter was annointed the crown prince, and then he ascended the throne after his father

At this time there was another king by name Śrīdharma, who ruled in Ujjaini, in modern Mālwā, and whose chief minister was Namuci Once Suvrata Sūri, a disciple of Lord Munisuvrata, the twentieth Jaina Tīrthankara, happened to come to Ujjaini on his mission preaching the doctrine of his great Master Namuci, proud of his own

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[1] Life in Ancient India—Dr J C Jain, p 253

[2] Ancient India—T L Shah, Vol II

[3] Commentary by Nemicandra Sūri, P 246 cf

learning, went to him to have discussion, and was unable to reply to many a question put by Suvrata Sūri On this, instead of feeling ashamed, he was greatly enraged and tried to assassinate the Jaina monk The king Śrīdharma, on this behaviour, dismissed Namuci and turned him out of his kingdom

Namuci then came to Hastināpura, and took to the ministership of Mahāpadma, who was the ruler there at that time Fortunately for Namuci, Hastināpura was in those very days invaded by one Sinhabala, and Namuci, who was a perfect warrior and a great general, not only defeated him, but imprisoned and brought him before king Mahāpadma The king was very much pleased with his minister, and asked him to demand any boon The clever minister withdrew saying only that he would demand one on some other occasion

After some time Suvrata Sūri, the same Jaina monk, along with his comrades, happened to come to Hastināpura, and was obliged to stay there for a pretty long time due to the approach of the rainy season So Namuci now got a golden opportunity of taking revenge on the monk. He, therefore, went to the king, reminded him of his promise for a boon, and demanded his throne for some time in order to perform a sacrifice according to the Vedic rites To this request the king assented, and retired to his palace After the sacrifice was over, all the sages in the Hastināpura kingdom came to bless Namuci, but not the Jaina monks Namuci, therefore, sent for them and

bade them leave the capital city at once and the kingdom within seven days, and that failing which they would be put to death But the monks could not leave the place for the duration of the rains, and as one of them approached Visnukumāra, the elder brother of the king, who had taken to asceticism, and was living on the Merū mountains, and told him everything and sought his help Visnukumāra came down to Haṣtināpura and tried to pursuade Namuci to be lenient towards the monks, but he would not listen On this Visnukumāra demanded from him sufficient place for three paces, and is believed to have expanded his body to one lac Yojanas, putting one step on the eastern sea, and the second on the western, and the third on the head of Namuci, who was killed on the spot "

*Conclusion*

It is not always possible in the present state of our knowledge to date many of the events mentioned in the Epic and the Jaina literature with precision The names of Manu, Ilā, Soma, Atri and others reach us today only as legendry figures We are quite unable to say with confidence when these mythological persons existed Orthodox Hindus would assign to them hundreds and thousands of years, and this would take them to a time of which no written chronological and dated records have come down to us The same is the case with the Jaina traditions

It would be seen that it is all a mixture of history and legends, but we cannot wholly

disbelieve all the legends, for there is often a great substratum of truth underlying the most ancient legends

Piecing all the above traditions together, we can make out the following chronological history of the city of Hastināpura

(1) Hastināpura was founded on the bank of the river Ganges by King Hastin, a descendant of Pururava, who was son of Ilā, the daughter of Manu, the father of mankind

(2) The city was in great affluence in the earliest period and continued to be the capital city for thousands of years, and it was visited by the most distinguished personalities of the period

(3) The city of Hastināpura played an important part throughout the Kaurava-Pāndava conflict, and was the metropolis of the Mahābhārata battle which is believed to have taken place in the fourteenth Century B C

(4) Then we learn from the literary sources about its having been washed away by the Ganges, nearly one hundred years after the Mahābhārata battle But Pargiter places the date of its being washed away near about 820 B C [1] It is probable, however, that due to the washing away of Hastināpura, the Kuru capital was

[1] See page 14.

shifted to Kauśāmbi or Kosam near Allahabad, but the ancient city had not been destroyed completely, and a new settlement cropped up there soon after

(5) In the ninth Century B C Hastināpura seems to have been visited by Lord Pārśvanātha, the twenty-third Jaina Tīrthankara

(6) In the sixth Century B C again, the people of this great city of Hastināpura are referred to have welcomed personages like Lords Buddha and Mahāvīra, and listened to their sermons Buddhist works refer to the city as 'a rich, prosperous and populous city Close by there is a big lake full of lotuses, swans and cranes '

(7) The Kuru country was conquered by Mahāpadma Nanda of Magadha in the fifth Century B C It is difficult to say whether its capital was Hastināpura or some other town

(8) In the third Century B C we hear of the city of Hastināpura again, but find it declining in status to that of a provincial capital in the reign of King Samprati

(9) After this we do not come across any reference to this great city of the ancient times for a very long time In 635 A D Hiuen-Tsiang, the Chinese traveller, came to India, and visited a large number of

places including Handwāra, Sthānveśvara, Panipat, Sonepat, Indraprastha, Ahicchatra etc.,[1] but there is no mention of his visit to the city of Hastināpura, which shows that that city was fading away and had lost its importance

(10) But it had not gone out of existence totally for in the fourteenth Century A D again we come across a reference to this great city in *Vividha Tīrthakalpa* of Jinaprabha Sūri[2] who was the most revered person at the court of the Muslim King Muhammad Tughlak He paid a visit specially to Hastināpura and other sacred places of the Jainas He gives a list of some historical persons who were born in Hastināpura, or visited this place He also mentions that there were four Jaina temples existing at Hastināpura associated with Lords Śāntinātha, Kunthunātha, Aranātha and Mallinātha, and another temple that of 'Ambādevi' The temples have been mentioned to be sufficiently old, which must have been built centuries earlier, and the place is referred to as "one of the most sacred places of the Jainas, who make a practice of visiting it on certain sacred days of the year"

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[1] Cunningham's Ancient Geography of India (Edited by S N Majumdar)

[2] Edited by Muni Jinvijayaji, published by the Singhi Series

Today, however, there is no trace of the great city of the ancient times at all, and in place of the big Jaina temples there exist only three memorials of the Jaina Tīrthankaras All this is clear evidence of the gradual disappearance of what was at one time the greatest and the most important city of Āryāvarta

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ANCIENT ĀRYĀVARTA
BACTRIA
HINDU KUSH MTS
KAPIŚA
HERAT
KABUL
JALALABAD
PUSHKALĀVATI
TAKSHAŚILĀ
GHAZNI
GANDHARA
KARAKORAM MTS
HIMALAYA
Sindhu R
SAKASTHĀNA
Helmand R
Arghandab
KANDHĀRA
DRANGIĀNA
BRĀHŪI MTS
GEDROSIA
KIRTHAR MTS
Indus R
Sindhu R
ŚĀKALA
MADRA
UDUMBARA
BEĀS
KUNINDA
BRAHMĀVARTA
MĀYĀPURA
HASTINĀPURA
KURUKSHETRA
INDRAPRASTHA
MATSYA
VAIRATA
PANCHALA
AHICHHATRA
KAMPILYA
MATHURĀ
SURASENA
KOSALA
SRAVASTI
KAPILAVASTU
AYODHYA
VIDEHA
R Brahmputra
MOUNTAINS
Brahmaputra R
MARUBHUMI
ARAVALLI MTS
MAKRAN
SAKADVĪPA
MADHYAMIKA
R Yamuna
Ganga
KAUŚAMBI
PRAYĀGA
KASI
VAIŚĀLI
PATALIPUTRA
RĀJAGRIHA
MAGADHA
BUDDHA GAYA
BHARHUT
VINDHYA PARVATA
AVANTI
ĀKARA
ERAN
VIDISA
UJJAINI
PARIPATRA PARVATA
R Mahi
KACCHA
DVĀRAVATI
SURĀSHTRA
GIRINAGARA
MAHISHMATI
R Narmada
BHRIGUKACCHA
R Tapti
RIKSHAVAT PARVATA
VIDARBHA
ARAB MAHĀ SĀGARA
VANGA
PUNDRA
SUMA
SAMATATA
KALINGA
TOSALI
VANGA KHARI

IV

## THE EPIC DESCRIPTION OF HASTINĀPURA

As a concrete expression of the motive forces and ideas, regulating the life of the citizens, the city has been regarded by ancient historians the noblest monument of human art and conception. In its genesis is wrapped up, to a great extent, the evolution of the civilization of the people who built it In Vedic literature, the word for city is '*Pura*', which means a 'fort' or 'rampart' In the Arthaśāstra of Kautilya, a city appears with the appellation of '*Durga*' i e 'difficult to penetrate', fortified with strong defence and other arrangements to resist an attack Its description in the Brahmavaivarta Purāna and Kāmandakīya Nītisāra is strikingly like that of a military encampment

An Indo-Aryan ideal city stands always at the crossing of the great highways It is a meeting place of shepherd and peasant, of merchant and artificer, of priest and pilgrim, of court and camp. It is the centre towards which converge streams that rise in all the quarters of the globe It is a market place for exchange, focus of wealth and industry, a hall of international council and the quadrangle of world university

According to the Śukranītisāra,[1] the capital city ought to have the advantages of the hills, plains, seas or rivers , command vegetables, animals, and mineral resources, and be a centre of quick commercial activities It should be situated on

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[1] 1, 425-33.

the river bank, if not on the sea shore, surrounded by walls and ditches, with four gates in all directions, provided with wells, tanks, pools, good roads, and parks on roads, and well-constructed taverns, temples, and inns for travellers

River sites, sea coasts, especially the mouths of rivers, offer the best facilities for the origin and growth of cities, because a river is not only a means of communication with the interior of the country, a way of transport and locomotion, but also offers an outlet unto the outer world, thus fostering and encouraging commerce Rivers are national assets of no mean importance Even in times of antiquity, when the Aryans were spreading their civilization, and modern materialism and commercialism was out of question, great rivers of India offered the best routes for their spread and advance Hence the first Indo-Aryan colonies were planted on the valleys of the Indus and the Ganges Besides, a coast belt, a river side or a mountain valley is an easy defence in times of war, as well as of access in times of peace These have also a never-failing sanitary importance To these reasons combined with local advantages we owe the evolution of a great many Indo-Aryan settlements in the shape of riparian towns It is incidentally noteworthy that the orthodox Hindu treatise make it a rule to establish towns on the right bank of the river.

*Reference to Hastināpura in the Mahābhārata*

In order to trace an account of the ancient city of Hastināpura, we have to depend mostly

upon a few references we come across in the Mahābhārata This great Epic throws a flood of light on the conditions of India in the ancient times , but as is well-known to most of the scholars, there is great difficulty in utilising the materials furnished by it. It was not the production of a particular period but grew out of older nuclei, handled and rehandled by subsequent composers. Thus it took centuries to be reduced to its present form Moreover, though attributed to a single writer, it seems to have been composed piece-meal, retouched and rehandled several times afterwards.

Our difficulty, therefore, lies in separating the various strata of the composition, which may bear the stamp of the age in which they were produced Historical traditions may be reproduced in tact by a subsequent writer, but whenever some one tries to draw a picture of past social life, it is sure to be influenced imperceptibly by the ideas and conditions of the age in which the writer lives

There is, unfortunately, no direct description of the city of Hastināpura in the Mahābhārata as we find that of other cities like Indraprastha, Ahicchatra etc What we might do then is to determine the lay out of the city of Hastināpura by reference to certain ceremonies and processions referred to in the great Epic and also to corroborate them on the evidence of the descriptions of other cities

For instance, the scene of the arrival of Kunti with Pāndu in Hastināpura after living for some

years in the jungle is described in the following words:[1]

> "Arrived at Kurujāngala within a short time, the illustrious Kunti presented herself at the *principal gate* The ascetics then charged the *porters* to inform the king of their arrival The men carried the message within a trice to *the court* And the *citizens of Hastināpura seated on all kinds of cars (i e rathas) and conveyances by thousands, vast number of Ksatriyas with their wives, and Brāhmanas with theirs came out to see them* And the concourse of *Vaiśyas and Śūdras* too was as large on the occasion"

Here is the description of a Water Palace erected by the Kauravas on the Ganges for destroying the Pāndavas [2]

> "Duryodhana built a *palace decorated with hangings of broad cloth and other rich stuff* on the bank of the Ganges, graced with trees and crowned with flowers
>
> On arriving at the place, the princes surveying *the beauty of the gardens and the groves entered the palace, and saw that the architects had handsomely plastered the walls, and the ceilings,* and that the *painters* had painted them carefully The *windows* looked very graceful, and *artificial fountains* were splendid Here and there were *tanks of cellucid water* in which bloomed forests of lotuses

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[1] Mahābhārata, Ādi Parva—cxxvi (Trans P C Roy)

[2] Ibid—cxxviii.

The banks were decked with various flowers whose fragrance filled the atmosphere"

When the princes had finished their education, arrangements were made for them to show their proficiency [1]

> ". . And Drona, endued with great wisdom, then *measured out a piece of land* that was void of trees and thickets, and furnished with wells, and springs The artificers built thereupon a *large and elegant stage* according to the rules laid down in the scriptures And it was *furnished with all kinds of weapons* And they also built another *elegant hall for the lady spectators And the citizens constructed many platforms, while the wealthier of them pitched many spacious and high tents all around* And when the day fixed for the exhibition approached, the King, accompanied by his ministers etc, came unto the *theatre* of almost celestial beauty constructed of pure gold and decked with strings of pearls and stones of *lapis lazuli* and the *ladies in gorgeous attire* joyfully ascended the platforms And with the noise of blowing *trumpets* and beating of *drums* and the sound of many voices that vast concourse became like the agitated ocean"

The building of the Gambling Hall is thus described [2]

> "And the King commanded his men in loud voice 'Carefully construct an *Assembly*

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[1] Mahābhārata, Ādi Parva—cxxxvi (Trans P C Roy)

[2] Ibid Sabhā Parva, xlix

*Hall* of the most beautiful description with *a thousand columns* decked with gold and *lapis lazuli*, furnished with a *hundred gates* and *full two miles in length and in breadth the same.* And having brought *carpenters* and *joiners* set, Ye, jewels and precious stones all over the walls and spread colour carpets inlaid with gold and make it delightful, and handsome, and *easy of access*"

Dhrtarāstra, on hearing the news of coming of Śrī Krsna to Hastināpura as a messenger of the Pāndavas commanded[1]

" Let the *welkin* all around at my command be crowded with pendants and banners and let *the roads by which Janārdana will come be well-watered and its dust removed.* Let Duśāsana's *abode*, which is better than Duryodhana's, be cleansed and well-adorned without delay *That mansion is graced with many beautiful buildings*, is pleasant and delightful, and abounded with wealth of all seasons It is in that abode that all my wealth as also of Duryodhana is deposited"

The arrival of Śrī Krsna in Hastināpura is described in the following words[2]

" And in honour to Śrī Kṛṣna, the city of Hastināpura was beautifully adorned and the principal streets were decorated with diverse jewels and gems All the citizens came out and lined the streets And *substantial*

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[1] Mahābhārata, Udyoga Parva, lxxxv (Trans. P. C. Roy).
[2] Ibid, lxxxviii.

*mansions* filled with high-born ladies, seemed to be on the point of falling down in consequence of their weight and that lotus-eyed *grinder* then entered Dhrtarāstra's *ash-coloured palace which was adorned with numerous buildings* And having passed through *the first three chambers of the palace*, Keśava came upon the royal son of Vicitravīrya "

Śrī Krsna's going to Duryodhana's palace is referred to as follows [1]

" . Govinda went to Duryodhana's palace that was furnished with great wealth, adorned with beautiful seats Unobstructed by the *orderlies-in-waiting*, that hero of great fame *crossed three spacious yards in succession and then entered that mansion high as the summit of a hill* and blazing forth with beauty "

The scene of Śrī Krsna's going to the Royal Court is very beautifully described [2]

" the handsome cars of those heroes adorned with gold and drawn by excellent steeds, and each producing a loud rattle, as they moved forward, shone brilliantly And Keśava endowed with great intelligence and blazing with beauty soon came upon *a broad street that had previously been swept and watered and that was fit to be used by the highest of kings* And then *cymbals* began to play, and *conches* began to be blown and other instruments also to pour forth their music and

[1] Mahābhārata, Udyoga Parva, xc (Trans P C Roy).

[2] Ibid, xciii.

many thousand attendants dressed in various and strange constumes, and bearing *swords* and *lances* and *axes*, marched in advance of Keśava "

The scene of Yudhisthira entering the city of Hastināpura after vanquishing the Kauravas in the battle is also described in the Śānti Parva [1]

"At the time, they entered the city of Hastināpura, thousands upon thousands of citizens came out to behold the sight *The squares and streets were well-adorned* and perfumed with incense *The large mansions that stood on the street sides* were decked with every ornament, overlaid with powdered perfumes and flowers and fragrant plants and *hung over with garlands and wreaths New metallic jars full of water to the brim were kept at the door of every house*, and levies of charming maidens of fairest complexion stood at particular spots Having passed through the streets, Yadhisthira entered the beautiful palace of the Kurus which was most artistically and beautifully decorated"

Yudhisthira's assigning of palaces to his brothers is thus referred to [2]

" After this the mighty Vrkodara entered *the palace of Duryodhana that was adorned with many excellent buildings and rooms* and that abounded with gems of diverse kinds, and that teemed with servants, male

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[1] Mahābhārata, Śānti Parva, ix (Trans P C Roy)

[2] Ibid xiv

> and female, and that Yudhiṣthira assigned to him with the approval of Dhrtarāṣtra. The mighty-armed Arjuna also at the command of the King, obtained *the palace of Duśāsana, which consisted of many excellent structures* and was adorned with the gateways of gold and which abounded with wealth and was full of attendants of both sexes The palace of Durmarśana was given to Nakula The foremost of palaces belonging to Durmukha was exceedingly beautiful and adorned with gold It *abounded with beds* and beautiful women with eyes like lotus-petals He gave it to Sahadeva, who was employed in doing what was agreeable to him "

Finally we find Dhrtarāstra giving his advice to Yudhisthira on many a things including city protection, before retiring to the jungle [1]

> " *The citadel should be properly protected with strong walls, and arched gates On every side, the walls, with watch towers on them standing close to one another, should be such as to admit six persons walking side by side on their tops The gates should all be large and sufficiently strong. Kept in proper places, those gates should be properly guarded* "

The Mahābhārata, unlike Hastināpura however, contains an elaborate description of Indraprastha, a neighbouring and contemporary city

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[1] Mahābhārata, Āśrama Vāsika Parva, v (Trans P C. Roy)

" And content with half the kingdom, the Pāndavas removed to Khāndavaprastha, which was an unreclaimed desert Then those heroes of unfading splendour. . .arriving there, beautified the place and made it a second heaven. And then those mighty car-warriors, selecting with Dvaipāyana's assistance, a sacred and auspicious region, *performed certain propitiatory ceremonies, and measured out a piece of land for their city Then surrounded by a trench wide as the sea, and the walls reaching high up* to the heavens and white as the fleecy clouds or the rays of the moon, that foremost of cities looked resplandant like Bhogawatī—the capital of the Nether kingdom decked with Nāgas And it looked adorned with *palatial mansions, and numerous gates each furnished with a couple of panels* resembling the out-stretched wings of Garuda And it was *protected with gateways* and well-furnished with numerous *weapons of attack,* the missiles of the foe could not make even the slightest impression on them And *the turrents along the walls were filled with armed men* in course of training And the walls were lined with numerous warriors along their whole length And *there were thousands of sharp hooks and Śataghnīs* (machines slaying a century of warriors), and numerous other machines on the battlement And there were also *large iron wheels planted on them* And with all these was that foremost of cities adorned And *the streets were all wide and laid out excellently And decked with*

*innumerable white mansions*, the city became like unto Amarāvatī, and came to be called Indraprastha—like unto Indra's city "[1]

Description of the Palace of the King:

"And in a delightful and auspicious part of the city arose the peerless Palace of the Pāndavas And it was of great beauty, and of celestial make, composed entirely of gems and precious stones, and celebrated throughout the three worlds It consisted of columns of gold, which occupied *an area of five thousand cubits* It possessed an exceedingly beautiful form, shone in great splendour .. It was so delightful and refreshing, and composed of such excellent materials, and furnished with such golden walls and archways, and adorned with so many varied pictures, and was withal, so rich and well-built that in beauty it far surpassed the mansion of Brahmā himself "[2]

Other description of the City

"And around the city were laid many *delightful gardens*, adorned with flowers of excellent kinds And those verdant groves always resounded with the notes of maddened peacocks and *kokilas* And there were *various pleasure houses* bright as mirror and numerous bowers of creepers, and charming and *artificial hillocks*, and many *lakes full to the brim* with crystal water, and delightful

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[1] Mahābhārata, Ādi Parva, ccxxiii, (Trans P C. Roy).

[2] Ibid Sabhā Parva, iii

*tanks* fragrant with lotuses and lilies, and adorned with swans and ducks and *cakravākas* And there were many delicious pools overgrown with fine acquatic plants And there were also diverse *ponds* of great beauty and of large dimensions

And when the city was built, there came numberless Brāhmanas, well-acquainted with all the Vedas, and conversant with every language, wishing to dwell there And there came also unto that city, numberless merchants from every direction in hopes of earning great wealth, persons well-skilled in the arts, all wishing to take up their abode there "[1]

Description of King Yudhisthira's assigning palaces to various monarchs who had come to Indraprastha to attend the Rājasūya sacrifice

" And at the command of King Yudhisthira the Just, mansions were assigned to all the monarchs, which were *full of various kinds of edibles and adorned with tanks and tall trees* And those mansions were white and high and delightful to behold and adorned with *every kind of furniture* They were enclosed on all sides with *well-built and high and white-washed walls.* And their *windows were covered* with networks of gold and their interiors were adorned with rows of pearls Their *flights of stairs were easy to ascent,* and the flowers were all

[1] Mahābhārata, Ādi Parva, ccxxiii (Trans P C Ray)

laid over with costly carpets, and they were hung over with garlands of flowers, and perfumed with excellent aloes. And white as snow they looked extremely handsome even from a distance of a yojana. And their doors and entrances were set uniformly, and were *wide enough* to admit a crowd of people Adorned with various costly articles and built of various metals, they looked like peaks of the Himavat "

From the above descriptions we would be justified in concluding that the city of Hastināpura had a conscious origin and there was probably a definite plan made by the town planners before the city was actually built

*Selection of Site*

The first and the foremost duty of the town planner in ancient times was the selection of site for the capital city, keeping in view the extent to which its natural situation could best be turned into fortification

The Mānasāra[1] directs the examination of the site as to its fitness from its colour, smell, taste, shape, direction, sound and touch It should be, it further adds, situated in a climate of moderate temperature, producing water when dug to an average depth, with a stream running from left to right, of an agreeable odour, containing a great quantity of soil, which is fertile enough for all varieties of seeds to sprout up in it

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[1] Chapter III.

Now, we find that the capital city of Hastinā-pura was, as far as possible, centrally situated It stood on the right bank of the most sacred river of the Hindus—the Ganges It was surrounded by a forest, the Kurujāngala And these natural circumstances could very well be utilized to defend it from an outside attack The area was rich in game and replete with animal resources The land all around was very fertile, and being on a river bank, there were facilities for irrigation and ample bathing, which in itself is a religious rite and an indispensable preliminary to any religious function or observance and sacrificial rites with the Hindus

The selection of the ground being over, the *Sthapati* (the civic architect) then turned his attention to its purification and consecration It was absolutely neccessary that all the quarters should be distinctly and precisely ascertained and marked on the spot, on which the town was to stand, for the purpose of giving it an auspicious aspect and of preventing its being opposite to any of the intermediate points which were pronounced inauspicious We have a concrete example of this performance in the building of the city of Indraprastha as already mentioned

*Lay out of the City*

The next duty of the master-builder was to fix the area of the city suitable to its requirements. Generally the Indo-Aryan towns extended over a big area According to the Rāmāyana, the city

of Ayodhyā was twelve yojanas[1] in length and three yojanas in breadth, and from Harivamśā we come to learn that the extended and reconstructed city of Dvārāvati, viz. modern Dwārikā, was twelve yojanas in length and eight yojanas in breadth

In the Mahābhārata we have already noticed Dhrtarāṣtra commanding to built a gambling hall full two miles in length and in breadth the same Considering the fame and importance of the city of Hastināpura, we can, therefore, safely conclude that this city too was equally big

The Purānas also suggest that the natural fort should be eight yojanas long and four yojanas broad

*Ramparts, Walls and Ditches*

Having marked off the peripheries, the master builder had to visualise the pre-existing arteries of communication, natural and artifical, of the site with other towns of the kingdom, and with other important centres of commerce and agriculture, and other important places, forts or forests with which heavy and frequent intercourse was indispensable He had then to erect the walls and to excavate the ditches, and thereafter to adjust the number of the city gates and their location in confirmity with the above plan The principal and essential gates were those which were situated in all the four directions

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[1] One Yojana is equivalent to 8 × 1,000 × 17¼ cubits (B B Dutt—Town Planning in Ancient India, 1925, P 63)

As regards the ditches, these used to be sufficiently deep and of double the width These used to be filled with water lest an enemy might cross these and enter the city The ditches of Dvārāvati, the Capital city of Śrī Krsna, looked like the river Ganges [1] Indraprastha, the new capital founded by King Yudhisthira, was girt with ditches resembling sea in their width

For strengthening fortification, ramparts were erected The city of Hastināpura was properly protected with strong walls and arched gates on all sides, with watch towers on them standing close to one another The walls were wide enough to enable six persons to walk side by side on them The gates were large and strong Kept in proper places, these were properly guarded [2]

The city-wall of Indraprastha was also well-furnished with numerous weapons of attack There were thousands of sharp hooks and *Śataghnīs* and numerous other machines and large iron wheels fixed on them

*Roads, Streets and Lanes*

One of the most important function of a civic architect is the lay out of the roads, streets and lanes These serve two purposes firstly, they are highways for traffic, and secondly, they divide the sites for buildings Incidently, and as a matter of course, they have sanitary value, providing arteries for free ventilation

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[1] Harivamśa, Viṣnu Parva, 98, 11

[2] Mahābhārata, Āśrama Vāsika Parva, v (Trans P. C Ray)

It is difficult to say with any degree of certainty whether the town planners of ancient India had an adequate idea of the importance of light and air in street planning For in many ancient cities which have come down to our times the streets are often inordinately narrow and dark But they did have a clear grasp of one principle, namely, that of adjusting the width of streets to the volume of traffic through them, so as to reduce the probability of congestion, since we find many references in the Mahābhārata on this point, for instance

> "The principal streets were decorated and the citizens lined in them to have a look at Janārdana"

> "Keśava soon came upon a broad street that had previously been swept and watered, and that was fit to be used by the highest of kings"

> "The squares and streets were well adorned"

> "Having passed through the streets, Yudhisthira then entered the beautiful palace of the Kurus"

From the above descriptions it is clear that the streets of the city of Hastināpura were sufficiently wide so as to accommodate people on both sides while a royal procession was passing on elephants and chariots It is also clear that there were squares made at the crossings of streets

The description of the city of Indraprastha, given in the Mahābhārata, definitely establishes that streets in that city were all wide and laid out

excellently And there was no fear in them of accidents

According to Harivamśa,[1] 'Vehicular streets (Rathyā), avenues (Vīthi), and men's roads (Nṛnām mārgāh)' were constructed in the city of Dvārāvatī, modern Dwārikā

In Kautilya's Arthaśāstra[2] dealing with 'Buildings within the fort', we find mention of roads for chariots, roads for cattle, roads for elephants, and roads for minor quadrupeds as well as for men

Further, the streets were arranged and planted according to what is known as the rectangular chess-board system of street planning That is to say, the streets were laid out in parallel rows cutting one another at right angles Thus we read in Harivamśa about sixteen cross-sections formed by the eight large streets of Dvārāvatī, four running transverse to the other four

*Buildings*

The ancient Indian literary sources give us an exhaustive idea of the demarcation of sites for the Royal Palace, Council House, shrines of various gods belonging to people of different persuation with reference to their wards, for wells, reserviors, markets, cremation grounds, gardens, orchards, blocks of houses, and wards for different communities and various professions With the division of the *muhallās* or residential sites, the

[1] Viṣṇu Parva, 28, 38

[2] Book II, Chap IV.

duty and control of the master builder did not end. Indo-Aryan town-planners had fixed, beyond controversy, the shape, area, method of planning, and distribution of various buildings of the citizens according to their caste, rank in society, position in the body politic and also profession.

*Dwelling Houses*

Unfortunately we do not have a detailed accounts of the residential quarters in the city of Hastināpura The Mahābhārata contains only stray descriptions of the buildings in the city, for instance :

> " And substantial mansions filled with high born ladies seemed to be on the point of falling down in consequence of their weight "

> "The large mansions that stood on the street sides were decked with every ornament, overlaid with powdered perfumes and flowers and fragrant plants and hung over with garlands and wreaths "

Here is a general description of the buildings in the city of Indraprastha

> "That foremost of cities looked resplendent like Bhogawatī, the capital of the Nether kingdom And it stood adorned with palatial mansions with numerous gates each furnished with a couple of panels resembling the outstretched wings of Garuḍa and decked with innumerable white mansions ."

It is however worth mentioning that the most ancient canons of town planning forbade any

doors or windows of houses opening out on the main thoroughfares In later times the utility and significance of gates vanished Yet, the arches were there The architecture of these arches was often magnificent, rising to the sublime in many instances, and a pedestrian could not but be impressed by the imposing spectacle of beautiful facades confronting his eyes

*Royal Palaces*

We come across very rich description of the Royal Palaces in the city of Hastināpura For instance

*Duryodhana's Palace*—It was adorned with many excellent and beautiful buildings and rooms, that abounded with gems of diverse kind

*Duśāsana's Palace*—According to Dhrtarāstra, it was better than Duryodhana's, and consisted of many excellent structures and was adorned with gateways of gold, was pleasant and delightful, and abounded in wealth of all the seasons It was in this Palace that all the wealth of the king was deposited

In the same way we find an exhaustive description of many other Palaces there We also learn that the colour of Dhrtarāstra's Palace was that of '*ash*'

From the description of the Palaces in the famous city of Indraprastha, we know about their doors, windows, archways, walls, columns, floors,

roofs, and stairs etc We also learn that the Palaces were high enough, for there are frequent references to their touching the sky

*Court and Assembly Hall*

There are very frequent references to Court and Assembly Hall at Hastināpura in the great epic. We find description mostly of the pomp and show of the Court and Assembly Hall, and also of the King's throne and those of various other seats meant for the courtiers and nobles We also learn about the arrangements of the seats there.

The halls were very big, and spacious and in order to reach the main Hall, one had to pass through three spacious chambers in succession, and this appears to be universal in those days

*Gambling Hall*

Curiously enough, there was a separate and special chamber erected for gambling purposes at Hastināpura at the command of the king It was full two miles long and the same in breadth It consisted of a thousand columns of gold and lapis lazuli, had one hundred gates and was easy of access

Apart from these, we also come across description of Water Palace specially erected for the royal princes for playing in water

*Temples*

Most probably temples associated with Śiva and Pārvatī existed in those days There

were at least shrines of tutelary—hence the principal diety of the city These used to be important centres and there were spacious compounds there for such purposes as social gathering and the like There were also wells, tanks and gardens within the compound with necessary bathing facilities There were also shady trees there

Other minor centres were the *sarais*, the theatres and the markets The Mahābhārata cites the following main centres [1]

> "A market, a field for ascetics, a hall of the nobility, a pleasure garden, a garden for the assembly of officials and the council"

The public rest houses were constructed either by the State or by private individuals

The central market was situated in an open area between two important divisions of the city A ward allotted to people of a particular caste or profession contained a hall where the cofraternity or the guild of these persons periodically met to debate, and transact corporate business These constituted supplementary local centres

Large and elegant stages were made for showing the skill of famous warriors and other persons noted for physical exercises At such places there was generally a big crowd of spectators. Separate arrangements were made for lady spectators There were also tents pitched

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[1] Śānti Parva, Ch. 69 (Trans P C Roy)

*Gardens and Parks etc.*

A glance at the description of Indraprastha given in the Mahâbhârata will show that that renowned Capital of the Pāndavas was conceived and planned as a 'garden city', for, "around the city were laid many delightful gardens, adorned with numerous trees, bearing both fruits and flowers of excellent kinds And those verdant groves always resounded with the notes of maddened peacocks and *kokilas* There were various pleasure houses bright as mirror, numerous bowers of creepers, charming and artificial hillocks, many lakes full to the brim with crystal water, and delightful tanks fragrant with lotuses and lilies, and adorned with swans and ducks and *cakravākas*."

We learn from Harivamśa that Dvārāvati, the Capital city of Śrī Krṣna, was adorned with tanks of pure water, troughs, sheds for drinking water, splendid squares and parks and orchards and gardens

Ladies' parks were also not unknown in those days as is evident from the Rāmāyana[1] These parks were most probably forbidden for men

A few stray references in the Mahābhārata show that there were many gardens and parks in the city of Hastināpura They were quite big, full of beautiful trees, groves, flowers of diverse kinds, colours and smell There were pools full of crystal water The remarkable feature of these gardens and tanks was the cool 'Samudra grha' i e a secluded or shaded room, probably a shower

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[1] Ayodhyākānda, Canto 71, Verse 22.

bath room There were also constructed *pīthikās* viz altars, where people could take their seat and rest and enjoy friendly talks But we have no mention of any ladies' park in the city of Hastināpura

*Objects and Articles*

As to the various products of the period, we find mention of them in the Ādi Parva[1] and Sabhā Parva[2] of the great epic, the Mahābhārata The former Parva enumerates the gifts of Śrī Krsna to the Pāndavas, while in the latter we have a list of the gifts and presents made by the tributary princes to Yudhiṣthira on the occasion of the Rājasūya sacrifice

These included gems, pearls, ornaments of gold and silver, precious stones, works of ivory, red silken cloth, cotton cloth, linen garments, carpets, chariots of various descriptions, weapons of steel, swords, arrows, javelins, armours, leather goods including gloves made of skin of the big golden lizards, elephants, cows, horses, camels etc , and various other articles of use, not to mention those of every day necessity

The description of Courts and Palaces shows a large use of gold and silver We hear of bows and shafts of gold, golden coats of mail, scimitars of gold, not to speak of vessels, plates and chairs of gold used in the bedecking of palaces In regard to gold the epithet 'Śatakumbha-maya'

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[1] Chapters 199 and 221,

[2] Chapters 26, 30, 31, 49 and 51

is used in many places. The various chapters show, moreover, the use of bangles, pendants, and even garments of gold The use of bell-metallic vessels is mentioned in more than one place

Commerce was facilitated by the use of convenient units of value like the 'Hiranya', 'Suvarna', 'Śatamāna', 'Krisnala' and 'Niska' Yudhiṣthira is described as giving away Niskas to Snātakas, and in another place we are told that he gave away crores of Niskas to Brāhmanas after his Aśvamedha sacrifice But it is doubtful if these had acquired all the characteristics of a regular coinage as in the early Centuries of the Christian era

*The Country round Hastināpura*

Below is given a general description of the country round Hastināpura, taken from the Mahābhārata [1] It would help us in drawing a rough picture of the conditions of the country and the people in the reign of the righteous King Bhīsma Pitāmaha

> "Upon the birth of the three children—Vidura, Dhrtarāstra and Pāndu — Kurukśetra, Kurujāngala and the Kurus grew in prosperity The earth began to give abundant harvests, and the crops also became of good flavour And the clouds began to pour rains in season, and the trees became full of flowers and fruits And the draught cattle were all happy, and the birds and

[1] Ādi Parva—cix (Trans P. C. Roy).

other animals rejoiced exceedingly And the flowers became fragrant and the fruits became sweet And the cities and towns became filled with merchants and traders, and artists of every description And the people became brave, learned, honest and happy And there were no robbers then nor anybody who was sinful And it seemed that the golden age had come upon every part of the kingdom And the people, devoted to virtuous acts, sacrifices and truth, and regarding one another with love and affection, grew up in prosperity And free from pride, wrath and coveteousness, they rejoiced in sports that were perfectly innocent And the capital of the Kurus full as the ocean and teeming with hundreds of palaces and mansions, and possessing gates and arches, looked like a second Amarāvatī And men in great cheerfulness sported constantly on river, lakes, tanks, and in fine groves and charming woods And the Southern Kurus in virtuous rivalry with their Northern kinsmen, walked about in the company of *Siddhas* and *Cāranas* and *Riṣīs* And all over that delightful country, whose prosperity was thus increased by the Kurus, there were no misers, and no woman that was widow And the wells and the lakes were ever full of crystal water and the groves abounded with trees and the houses and abodes of Brāhmana's were all full of wealth And the whole kingdom was full of festivities And virtuously ruled by Bhīṣma, the country became so delightful

that the subjects of other kingdoms, leaving their homes came to dwell here and increased its population And in the houses of Kuru Chiefs, as also of the principal citizens, 'give and eat' were the only words constantly heard

And Pāṇḍu, possessed of great prowess, excelled all men in the art of bow; while Dhṛtarāṣṭra excelled all in physical strength While in the three worlds there was no one equal to Vidura in devotion to virtue and knowledge of the dictates of morality And beholding the restoration of the extinct line of Śāntanu, the saying became current in all countries, viz. that among mothers of heroes the daughters of the king of Kāśi were the first, that among countries, Kurujāngala was the first, that among virtuous men Vidura was the first, and that *among cities Hastināpura was the first*"[1]

The details are far from comprehensive for our space and period But the foregoing accounts help us to derive a general picture of one of the most celebrated capitals of Āryāvarta during its pristine glory, and of the various conditions of its development viz, military, demographic, industrial and commercial The description of the city architecture also brings forth the social life of the town dwellers The rich people, the military and mercantile magnates resorted to cities in large numbers and at their behest the artists poured their skill on public buildings to give expression

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[1] Mbh 1, 102, 1 to 23 (Trans P C. Roy)

to the happy life, the traditions and ideals of their masters. They decorated the temples and other buildings of great prominence The mute walls and colonnades of these buildings were thus great educative agents disseminating national culture. Besides being the nurseries of corporate ideals and military and artistic endeavours, the Indian cities were great symbols of nationalism in its most liberal and comprehensive sense It was this characteristic which gave a peculiar stamp to Indian civic life, and gave Indian cities its distinctive mark of individuality, which evokes the wonder and admiration of the visitors and other people all over the world

The greatest and the most famous Indian cities like those of Hastināpura, Indraprastha, Ayodhyā, Kāśi, Dwārikā etc known over the globe for their phenomenal wealth and luxury have now sunk down to non-entity and some even to oblivion leaving behind nothing but the names and dilapidated bricks to recall their glory. In certain cases it is even impossible in the present state of affairs to disentangle their identity and sometimes even the origin from their mythic cobwebs

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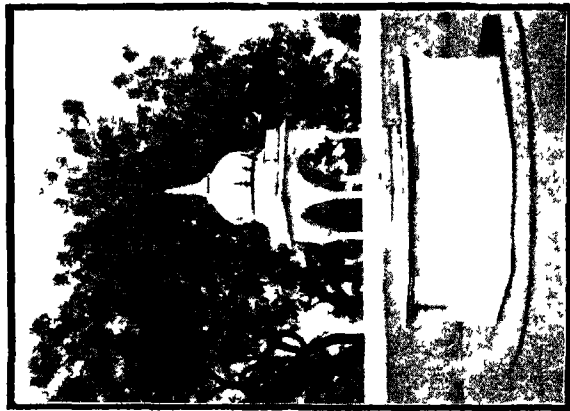
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INSIDE OF SHVETAMBARA TEMPLE

*Courtesy Archaeological Survey of India*

A SCENE OF EXCAVATION (WEST)

V

## RECENT EXCAVATIONS AT HASTINĀPURA

The Archæological Department of the Government of India brought the Ultā-Kheḍā mound under excavations in December 1950, which lasted for about four months The object of archæologists at present is not to open up the whole of mound, to gather the antiquities, and to bring the ancient ruins to light, but it is limited to the solution of a specific problem

### *The Problem of Indian Archæology*

At present Indian archæology has to collect materials in order to bridge up the wide gap that separates the Indus Valley Civilization of the third-second millennia B C from the cultures of the early Historical Periods ascribable to *circa* fourth-third centuries B C The picture of this wide gap is indeed very hazy and the few spots that have come to light so far as a result of various explorations and excavations are mutually disconnected.

The Archæological Department has long been searching for a solution of the above problem An eminent archæologist has offered the following suggestion for its solution.

> "No doubt extensive exploration and intensive excavation at selected sites are the only ways to solve this problem, yet a little bit of

planning seems imperative We have two known points in the chronological scale, namely, the Indus Valley Civilization on the one hand, and the Cultures of the early Historical Periods on the other If we can get a single site which may have the remains of the former culture at the bottom and of the latter at the top, with an uninterrupted occupation between the two, our problem would be solved in no time But since such a site seems to be more a dream than a reality, we shall have to work out a series of sites to complete the story We should look for two groups of sites · one, which may have the remains of Indus Valley Culture at the bottom and of some other further continuous occupation above them, and another, in which the remains of the early Historical Periods may be at the top and of the successively preceding cultures underneath

Thus, with these two fixed points, one in the early part of the scale, and another higher up, and working from the one towards the other, it would, it is hoped, be possible for us one day to bridge this gap Such a culture-sequence may have to be based mainly on the evidence of pottery (and in some cases on other industries as well), since an experience tells us, coin evidence becomes rarer the further we recede into the period before Christ "[1]

[1] Mr B B Lal—Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal (Letters), Vol XVI, No 1, 1950, pp 89-90

*Pottery*

Pottery has been called the alphabet of archæology. Its study is a primary basis of modern archæological science Unlike metal objects, which travel easily and last indefinitely, pottery is short-lived, and is liable to provide close evidence as to date and culture Even pottery may, on occasion, travel extensively, for example, on a site named Arikamedu, near Pandicherry in French India, are found, in addition to local products, wares made anciently as far away as Italy on the one hand and China on the other[1] Such contacts are of outstanding value as evidence for commerce and chronology But a noteworthy need in the Indian archæology at the present time is the careful classification of local pottery industry

*Ceramic Industry of Early Historical Period*

It is desirable here to say something about the ceramic industry of early Historical Period ascribable to circa fourth-third centuries B C

A number of sites in Northern and North-Central India have produced sherds of a distinctive highly polished ware which is of such quality as to suggest a separate cultural origin and a limited duration The fabric is finely levigated clay which is usually grey, but sometimes reddish in section, with a brilliantly burnished slip of the quality of a glaze, ranging in colour from jet black to grey, and a metallic steel-blue, occasionally varies

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[1] Ancient India, Vol II, pp 34-35, published by the Archæological Survey of India

with reddish brown patches The black coating contains ferrous oxide which is responsible for the black shade The original slip was evidently a highly ferruguous body ground in water and applied to the surface of the vessel before it was fired The black colour was doubtlessly developed by the action of reducing gas formed in the kiln. The polishing might have been done before or after the firing This ware is readily distinguishable by its brilliance from other polished or graphite-coated black ware This ware is generally known as the 'Northern Black Polished' ware

This pottery was never in abundance, but it occurs in relatively large quantities on sites in the Gangetic plain, in which must be located its main centres of dispersion Consistently with this, at Taxila in the Northern Punjab (now in Pakistan) very extensive excavations have yielded only a few fragments of this ware Ahicchatra (in district Bareilly), Kauśāmbī, Bhita, Jhusi (all in district Allahabad), Sarnath, Rajghat (both in district Banaras), Patna, Rajgir, Giriak (all in district Patna), Sanchi (in Bhopal State), Mathura etc [1] are some of the sites which are reported to have produced the Northern Black Polished ware.

Although at some of these sites the sherds were derived from deliberate excavations, the evidence as to the date of the Northern Black Polished ware is usually unsatisfactory For example, at Bhita, the records are insufficiently

[1] There is a long list of find-spots of this ware given in 'Ancient India', Vol I, pp 53-54, published by the Archæological Survey of India

precise. At Ahicchatra the lower levels, where the ware occurs, were inadequately explored A significant evidence comes from Taxila, where a few sherds of this ware were found below an occupational level which can approximately be assigned to circa 300 B C on the evidence of two hoards [1]

At Taxila, therefore, the Northern Black Polished ware is mainly of pre-Greek period and cannot be ascribed, as used to be generally suggested, to Greek influence In origin it may well go back to the fifth century B C, and it is likely to have survived later than the early part of the second century B C

There is one more class of pottery, the grey pottery, generally called the 'Painted Grey' ware. This ware has a fine medium-grained light-grey core, with surface varing in shade from ashy to darkish grey The grey colour of this pottery is apparently due to its being fired under reducing conditions in the kiln The pots are usually wheel-turned, but instances of hand-made specimens are not wanting The commoner types represented in this ware are bowls with slightly convex or as in a few cases round profice and shallow dishes with saggar or flat base The painted designs which are invariably in black seem to have been executed before firing They include simple bands round the rim, both inside as well as outside, oblique or vertical or criss-cross lines, concentric circles, and semi-circles in groups, rows of dashes or dotts, sigmas etc

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[1] Ancient India, Vol. I, Page 27 cf, published by the Archæological Survey of India.

This pottery has been found at Ahicchatra in the lowest levels Ahicchatra was the capital of the kingdom of Pāñcāla That city, according to the Mahābhārata wrested from the King of Pāñcāla by the Kauravas, who made it over to their preceptor, Drona The name of the capital meaning the 'Canopy of Serpents' gave rise to many legends about kings and religious teachers having been protected by the serpents The earliest inscription referring to that place, however, calls it Adhicchatra The ancient mounds of Ahicchatra are situated about half a mile to the north-east of the village of Ramnagar, which village itself is known to the Jainas as Ahicchatra even now

There are many more sites, more than a dozen in number for instance Tilpat, Barnawa, Kurukṣetra, Baghpat, Pehowa, Amin, Panipat &c, which have yielded the Painted Grey pottery from the earliest levels

*Date of Painted Grey Ware*

Now, the immediate problem is to date the Painted Grey pottery with possible exactness in comparison with the Northern Black Polished ware This problem can be solved only if a site which may yield one ware in the lower levels and the other on the top comes to notice; and for this very purpose several sites throughout the country were explored by the experts of the Archæological Department in the recent years, and mounds, containing both kind of potteries were excavated, of course, with no definite results But it can

roughly be concluded that the Painted Grey ware might have been in use prior to the Northern Black Polished ware It at least came to have its origin prior the Northern Black Polished ware and might have continued to be used side by side with it

Hastināpura also was put under dig primarily with the same aim in view The culture-sequence of Hastināpura on the basis of an analysis of the various finds—inscriptions, coins, beads, pottery types, structures and other antiquities obtained from the Ultā-Kheḍā mound, would be known only when an official report of the excavation work is published by the Archæological Department.

Now, turning our attention to the problem of assigning a definite date to the Painted Grey pottery, we know from the Mahābhārata that in the course of the negotiations that preceded the great battle, the Pāndavas informed the Kauravas that if they (the Pāndavas) were given five villages, they would feel satisfied, and that no war would be fought The names of these five villages, however, vary from text to text According to one[1] they are Avisthala, Vrkasthala, Mākandi, Vāranāvata, and one more (not named), while according to other[2] they are. Kuśasthala, Vrka-sthala, Asandi, Vāranāvata, and one more (unnamed) In the Venisamhāra[3] they are stated

[1] T R Krishnacharya & T R Vyasacharya—Sriman Mahābhārata, mainly based on South Indian texts—Udyoga Parva, Chap 31, Verse 19

[2] V S Sukhtankar—The Mahābhārata, ibid

[3] K N Dravide—Oriental Book Supplying Agency, Poona, 1922

to be Indraprastha, Vrkaprastha, Jayanta, Vāranāvata, and one more (name not mentioned). When the Kauravas did not agree even to this request, the battle was fought at Kurukṣetra

Of the places mentioned above, Indraprastha, Vrkaprastha, Vāranāvata and Kuruksetra have been identified with Indrapat, the site of Purana Qila in Delhi, Baghpat, about 20 miles to the north of Delhi on the eastern bank of the river Jamuna, Barnawa, about 19 miles to the north-west of Meerut city, and Kuruksetra, a railway station on the Delhi-Ambala line of the East Punjab Railway.[1]

According to the local tradition, however, the five villages, requested for by the Pāndavas, are identified with Indrapat, Baghpat, Tilpat—about 16 miles south of Delhi a little to the east of the Delhi-Mathura road, Sonepat and Panipat—railway stations again on the Delhi-Ambala line

Further, Kuruksetra is the place where the Mahābhārata battle was fought Barnawa is the site where a lac house (Lāksā Griha) was built by the Kauravas in order to burn the Pāndavas, who, however, came to know of the secret, and managed to escape before it was actually put to fire Amin is another place where Abhimanyū, the son of mighty-armed Arjuna, was killed by Jayadratha in a *Cakravyūha*, specially built for the purpose. Ahicchatra is the place already mentioned

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[1] N L Dey—The Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Mediaeval India, Second Edition.

*Hastināpura Excavations*

It would be seen that the above mentioned sites which are associated with the Mahābhārata story in some form or the other, have yielded the same pottery sequence—the Painted Grey ware, as already mentioned elsewhere, from the earliest levels which represent the first habitation there This shows at once that the Painted Grey ware was in use in the Mahābhārata period But such a conclusion has its own shortcomings It is not at all safe to assign a date to a pottery industry simply on the basis of literary evidence, more especially where there is no particular mention of such a ceramic industry It should be supported by other evidences based on inscriptions or coins or other antiquities, which are quite appealing and convincing factors

In the absence of an official report of the excavations at Hastināpura, it cannot be said with certainty whether the Ultā-Khedā mound helps us in the dating of the Painted Grey ware But the mound does not appear to be of any great importance in this respect Moreover, as already mentioned above the ancient city of Hastināpura was completely washed away by the erosive action of the Ganges about a Century after the Mahābhārata battle The erosive action of the otherwise mild river must have been unusual for the Kuru capital thereafter was shifted to Kauśāmbī or Kosam near Allahabad[1] It is not impossible,

[1] Kauśāmbī too is being excavated by the University of Allahabad A few reports of the excavations there have already been appeared in various news-papers.

under the circumstances, if we find remains of the city of Hastināpura buried under the sand somewhere in the beds of the Būḍhi-Gangā and the Ganges, i e in the *Khādar* land. And the present Ulṭā-Kheḍa represents, if at all, only the out skirts of the city which was probably a succession and was built by its people after the washing away of the original city of Hastināpura of the Mahabhārata fame

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